PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

This document provides an overview of the Programs of Distinction submission and review process. It also provides specific guidelines for completing the Programs of Distinction submission form.

OVERVIEW

What is Programs of Distinction?
Programs of Distinction is a collection of program descriptions that reflect the high quality of Cooperative Extension youth development programs occurring in communities across the United States. The collection is housed in a searchable web-based database. These programs:

- Exhibit strong program development characteristics and contribute to the youth development body of knowledge
- Convey new ideas, materials, or innovative methods related to positive youth development
- Demonstrate evidence of effectiveness, such as demonstrated changes in knowledge, behaviors, attitudes or aspirations of youth and adults

Why Programs of Distinction?
Programs of Distinction are designed to help 4-H and other Extension youth development professionals to:

- Communicate the high quality of Cooperative Extension-supported youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States
- Assist others in improving their practices in positive youth development
- Better understand and promote the nature of scholarship in their work
- Submit program outcomes through a peer-evaluated format

How are Programs of Distinction accessible?
Programs of Distinction are available on the National 4-H Headquarters website through a searchable database. The on-going submission process allows for continuously new content. Top "Program of Distinction" entries will be selected for invited presentations at the annual NAE4-HA conference. Programs of Distinction manuscripts will remain in the Programs of Distinction database for three years from the date of acceptance. Submitters will be notified when this 3-year anniversary approaches and will be invited to resubmit a manuscript for a "renewal" peer review.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

In order to be considered for inclusion in the Programs of Distinction database, a youth development program must meet the following definition: "**An organized, purposeful set of activities designed to achieve positive youth development outcomes.**"

Programs of Distinction submissions are reviewed independently by three trained peer reviewers for program content and readability. A total of 100 points are possible. The Program Content section may account for up to a total of 75 points. Comments will be provided by reviewers as appropriate.

The following "readability" factors may account for up to a total of 25 points:

- Interest—how strongly the submission captures and holds a reader's attention.
- Comprehension-The submission uses easy-to-understand language and flows well.
- Development-Paragraphs and sentences are appropriately sequenced and constructed to support the central idea and conclusions.
- Mechanics-The submission uses acceptable standards of spelling and grammar.
- Use of graphics and tables-Tables, graphs, or photographs are accurate and used appropriately. (Please note—you do not need to include these unless they are warranted).

FORMATTING AND LENGTH

The maximum length for the Program Content section (Questions 6-17) is eight pages, not including tables, graphics or references. These can go in the appendices. Please limit appendices to up to five pages. Text should use 11- or 12-point font, and have one-inch margins on all sides. Please include the program title as a header on each page. All appendices (tables, graphics, etc.) should be clearly labeled in the text (e.g., See Table 1).

SUBMITTING THE COMPLETED MANUSCRIPT

Please return your completed application to POD@csrees.usda.gov as an e-mail attachment with "POD Submission" in the subject line. Please send this as a Word file and not as a .pdf file. It is preferable to have the manuscript and appendices saved as one Word file.

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION GUIDELINES

Specific instructions for completing the Programs of Distinction Submission form questions are provided below in blue italic text. Illustrative sample text from Programs of Distinction manuscripts is also provided.

Abstract

Please include a 200-word abstract summarizing your program for publication in the POD database.

> **1. Title of the Program**

Please provide the name of the program that you would like to be considered for "Programs of Distinction" recognition.

2. Submitter's Contact Information

You may include multiple submitters.

3. Contact Information for Others Who Should Receive Copies of Correspondence about the Status of this Submission

Please include the names of others such as your state's program leader, colleagues, funders, etc. who should be notified about the status of this submission. These individuals will receive reviewer feedback.

4. Program of Distinction Category

The categories listed below are used to organize the Programs of Distinction database. Please select up to <u>six</u> categories that best reflect your program.

Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills Categories
- ❑ Leadership Development
- ❑ Caring Relationships, Community Spirit
- ❑ Diversity & Inclusive Environments
- ❑ Workforce Preparation
- ❑ Financial Education

Science, Engineering and Technology Literacy Categories
- ❑ Natural Resources Education
- ❑ Animal Science & Food and Fiber Systems
- ❑ Foods & Nutrition
- ❑ Agriculture & Environmental Biotechnology
- ❑ Horticulture & Plant Sciences
- ❑ Science Engineering & Technology

Healthy Lifestyles Categories
- ❑ Youth Obesity
- ❑ Nutrition Education
- ❑ Health & Fitness
- ❑ Safety
- ❑ Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions

Youth in Governance Categories
- ❑ Youth & Adult Partnerships
- ❑ Youth Decision-Making
- ❑ Youth Action
- ❑ Youth in Organizational Governance
- ❑ Community Engagement

Organizational Strategies Categories
- ❑ Strategic Communication & Marketing
- ❑ Partnership & Grants
- ❑ Risk Management Strategies
- ❑ Volunteer Development
- ❑ Developing & Retaining 4-H Professionals

❑ Leadership & Governance of Boards

5. Sources of funding that support this program

Please include any sources of funding, both public and private, that support this program. Please include any funding that you receive from the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), such as CYFAR, EFNEP, FSNEP, etc.

6. Knowledge and Research Base

Describe the knowledge and research base that was used to inform and develop the program's design and content. Include any relevant citations using American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines. This should be a synthesis or overview of the research base, not just a reference list. This section is similar to a literature review for a program or research article. In addition, the description of the program's design and content should reflect this knowledge and research base. Please include a complete listing of references in APA style at the end of your manuscript. For more information about APA style, please refer to the following manual: American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition.* Washington, DC: Author.

Sample Knowledge and Research Base Selection from a Program of Distinction
    In 2003, The Centers for Disease Control determined Kentucky to be the least active state in the nation. According to the Health Status Assessment released by the Louisville Metro Health Department in 2004, the top five leading causes of death in Louisville Metro are heart disease, lung cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes. The primary causes of these heath problems are obesity, poor diet, hypertension, sedentary lifestyles, and smoking. Sixty percent of the Louisville Metro population is overweight or obese. Over nine percent of Louisville Metro residents reported having diabetes compared to 6.1% for the nation.
    Nationally, physical inactivity has contributed to an unprecedented epidemic of childhood obesity (Report to the President, 2000). The percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled since 1980. Of children aged 5 to 10 who are overweight, 61% have one or more cardiovascular disease risk factors, and 27% have two or more. Increasing numbers of teens and preteens are developing Type 2 diabetes, which was long considered an "adult-onset" disease. Obesity in adolescence has also been associated with obesity in adulthood (Report to the President, 2000).
    The good news is that many of these health problems can be prevented and improved with changes in lifestyle (Health Status Assessment, 2004). Moderate exercise combined with healthy eating can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes and combat growing levels of obesity in children and adults.
    Practicing healthy lifestyles at a young age is key to preventing health problems that are largely associated with unhealthy lifestyles (Report to the President, 2000). Research has shown that changing a lifestyle habit is a difficult goal to accomplish and people need a tremendous amount of support to move to the action stage of improving their overall physical fitness levels (Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996; Report to the President, 2000). Many chronic health problems can be averted if children learn the importance of exercise and healthy food choices and develop daily exercise habits. If children learn at a young age to incorporate physical activity and healthy eating habits into daily routines, they can develop lifestyle

habits that will ultimately affect their health and may prevent the occurrence of chronic diseases associated with lifestyle choices (Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996).

The challenge to educators is how to motivate youth to participate in daily exercise and continue those efforts on an on-going basis. Research has shown that influences on physical activity patterns among adults and young people include: 1) confidence in one's ability to engage in regular physical activity; 2) enjoyment of physical activity; 3) support from others;
4) positive beliefs concerning the benefits of physical activity; 5) and lack of perceived barriers to being physically active (Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996; Report to the President, 2000). The Jefferson County 4-H Health Jam incorporated strategies to promote, support, and sustain daily physical activity for the 38 participating youth.

7. Needs Assessment

Please describe any needs assessment that was conducted in order to develop and/or plan the program. Specifically, what relevant data were collected and/or used as part of this needs assessment? From whom were the data collected? What did these data reveal about the needs in your community or among your target audience(s)? Please describe how the planned educational efforts in your program were based on this needs assessment.

Sample Needs Assessment Section from a Program of Distinction

In a census of school dropouts, Arizona ranks 50th in the nation for the percentage of teens between the ages of 16 to 19 who withdraw from school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004). According to the Children's Defense Fund, Arizona ranks 39th among states in the percent of children who are poor, ranks 50th among states in per pupil expenditures, has 77% of 4th graders reading below grade level, 14.8% of 16-19 year olds not enrolled in school and not high school graduates, and 24.6% juveniles arrested. Students recommended to Project SOAR are academically at-risk of school failure. At-risk behaviors include chronic truancy, behavior problems, office referrals, and low grades.

A community needs assessment (Mesa United Way, 2003) identified providing mentoring services as a priority. Youth involved in Project SOAR experience the following risk factors: poverty, limited English proficiency, low test scores, violent neighborhoods, and limited resources. The majority of participants involved in Project SOAR are Hispanic.

Sample Needs Assessment Section from a Program of Distinction

In the communities where the DARE to be You Bridges program is being tested, participants in family programs have repeatedly reported to community agency personnel that they feel alienation from the school system, especially families from the tribal and low income communities. Although this may seem to be a very specialized population, it actually is a microcosm of what happens throughout the nation when families and schools represent different cultures or socio-economic systems. Trust and positive relationships may never occur. The poor school completion rates are one indication that the schools are not aiding students with their success in school. In one sample high school in the focus communities, the drop out rate for Native American males was 71%, females, 29%; for Hispanic males, 58.3% and for females, 14.3%; and for Caucasian youth, an average of 27% dropout rate combined.

The DARE to be You Program has also has worked with people within the school systems to ensure that the system works both ways. School personnel, even with the best of intentions, may hold preconceived beliefs about certain types of families. This pattern continues generation after generation to a deleterious effect on schools, parents and children. The deficiency of school success in these areas is also linked to high alcohol and substance abuse issues, teen pregnancy and violence. The need to bring together families and school personnel in a series of child-centered, non-disciplinary workshops to build skills, relationships and understanding was highly supported by local steering committees. These committees consisted of families, school personnel and representatives from other local agencies.

8. Program Goals and Objectives

Please describe the goal(s) for your program. These can be defined as "Statements of purpose that generally take one to five years to complete and explicitly spell out who will do what for what purpose."[1] Goals are typically broader than objectives.

Please describe your program's objectives. Objectives are often described using the acronym "SMART"—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time limited.

The program goals and objectives should be clearly stated and relevant to your program and/or the knowledge base described in question 6 and the needs assessment described in question 7.

Sample Program Goals and Objectives Section from a Program of Distinction
        The project has four key goals: provide workforce preparation and improved self-esteem to special needs teens; create retail outlets that bring affordable, nutritious foods to consumers; teach valuable workforce readiness and life skills; and offer service learning and economic development opportunities. Seeds to Success, an entrepreneurial and life skills training program, prepares at-risk 14-18 year olds for the workforce. Through classroom education during the school year and on-the-job training, these teens are better able to take charge of their futures and become active, contributing members of the workforce and their communities. More specifically, the program objectives are to teach special needs youth how to select and prepare locally grown fruits and vegetables for use in meal preparation, how to handle money and banking procedures and to provide them opportunities to acquire workforce readiness and business skills by selling produce at a youth-run farmstand during summer months. Students are recruited to take advantage of the nine-week summer work experience and are encouraged to continue their work with Seeds to Success year to year, helpful in longitudinal assessment. In 2004, 28 youth (32% recruited from the classroom instruction phase) applied and were accepted for the youth farmstand component of the project. Seven (25%) students returned for a second year.

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[1] DeBord, K. et al. (n.d.) *Parenting evaluation decision framework: Writing goals*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

9. Target Audience

Please describe the specific target audience for your program. In your description, please include the geographical setting in which the program takes place:
- *Rural—Towns under 10,000 people*
- *Small town with population between 10,000 and up to 50,000*
- *Suburb of a city over 50,000*
- *Central city over 50,000*

It is also possible to have more than one target audience, such as youth participating in a 4-H Club and community members who are involved in a youth-led community service project. Please describe all relevant target audiences for the program in your description.

Sample Target Audience Section from a Program of Distinction

The target audience for the program is incarcerated fathers, their children, grandchildren and their other family members. Due to the unique situation of many of these families, the family structures of program participants vary greatly. The term "incarcerated father" is utilized as the primary definition of the incarcerated individual who participates in the program. However, the term is used more broadly. The program is open to any male who meets behavioral standards as set by the Missouri Department of Corrections and serves as a male role model to children and youth in his family unit. This allows for older brothers, uncles, grandfathers, and stepfathers to participate in the program. The program is open to all religions, ages, races, and backgrounds. The term 'care-giver' is used to identify family members who travel with the children to prison and participate in the meetings. These individuals may be wives, parents, grandparents, or brothers and sisters of the incarcerated father. Many times, these individuals are the grandparents attempting to raise the children of the offenders.

10. Type of Program

Please indicate, from the list below, which category best describes your program:
- *Organized 4-H Club—led by an adult with a planned program that is carried out throughout all or most of the year.*
- *Special interest/Short-term program/Day Camp—Groups of youth meeting for a specific learning experience*
- *4-H Overnight Camping Program—An Extension planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors that includes being away from home at least one night.*
- *4-H School Enrichment Program—Groups of youth receiving a sequence of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during school hours*
- *School-Aged Child Care Education Program—Educational program offered to youth outside of school hours, incorporating 4-H curricula.*
- *Other: _____ (Please Describe)*

11. Delivery Methods

Sample: Methods used to deliver the program section from a Program of Distinction

The LIFE program consists of three main components: 4-H activities, parenting training, and planning/coordination. The 4-H activities are held monthly at the Potosi Correctional Facility in rural Washington County. At the monthly meetings, children, their fathers, and the care-givers work together on traditional 4-H club activities such as arts and crafts projects and other curricula-based activities that focus on subjects such as conflict resolution, substance abuse resistance, teamwork, and character development. Working together as a team on 4-H projects gives children an opportunity to show their fathers that they are able and intelligent, and provides fathers with an opportunity to show their children that they can provide capable and caring parental guidance.

All fathers who participate in the LIFE program also attend monthly parenting skills classes. The classes allow the fathers to develop the skills needed to interact in a positive and caring way towards their children. The third meeting is the planning/coordination meeting. During this meeting, the fathers actually help design and plan the 4-H youth and family activities. The group has a constitution and elected officers. The group also uses this time to work on fundraisers and restorative justice projects.

12. Curricula and/or Educational Materials

Sample: Curricula and/or Educational Materials section from a Program of Distinction

One of the objectives of UNL for Families is to provide research-based, high quality educational materials that are easy to use and can be used locally to conduct programs for youth and families. To fulfill this need, the UNL for Families Toolkit was developed. The Kit includes: parenting curriculum and activities, video and audio tapes (with accompanying user guides) developed to strengthen communication and help families deal with stress, curriculum on step-parenting, methods for conducting family fun nights, Learn-At-Homes for families to learn better communication and management skills, techniques for reaching high-risk families, news releases, informational handouts on the six family strengths, resource lists for staff, family-related Fact Sheets, methods for strengthening families through 4-H programming, etc. These Kits include samples of "best practices", many of which have been developed by Cooperative Extension, others that have been adapted from national resources. Kits are expanded and modified to meet local community needs.

The UNL for Families website (www.unlforfamilies.unl.edu) serves as an educational portal for educators and families. This site provides a composite place for

educational materials related to families to be posted so they can be easily accessed. Examples of educational materials on the site include: research based information about strengthening youth/family relationships, needs assessments for families to analyze their strengths, "learn on the web" activities for families, age appropriate activities for children, sample cover letters and outlines for family fun nights, news releases, etc. Staff and partnering agencies use the information to best meet their needs. For example, they may use program outlines and PowerPoint presentations to teach; news releases may be distributed to local papers, or they may refer program participants to the site for additional information.

  FAMILY TREASURES: Creating Strong Marriages and Families, is a book being written by the UNL for Families Team based on the six family strengths. This piece, designed for the popular press, gives families the opportunity to assess their family strengths and have real hands-on opportunities for families to improve upon their targeted goals. In its final stages of production, *Family Treasures* is expected to go to print this fall. The book will be used as a take-home tool for families who have already expressed an interest in strengthening their family. Some groups may choose to work through the book together, addressing one of the six strengths each month. A satellite training on using the book as a teaching tool is scheduled for spring of 2006.

  One of the strengths of UNL for Families is the ability for each community to focus on their particular needs. The curriculum and website are designed so that the community can select which pieces work best. For example, in one county the UNL for Families Planning Team began its work by hosting monthly family fun nights. These nights began with a potluck supper and a hands-on activity for young people and their parents. This was followed by educational sessions for parents and fun activities for kids. Based on the success of these Family Fun Nights, parents asked for in-depth training on grandparents raising children.

13. **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Please describe any partnerships or collaborations that have been formed to support this program, especially any cross-disciplinary collaboration. How do these teams or partnerships support the program?

  Sample Partnerships or collaborations section from a Program of Distinction
The Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service formed a collaborative partnership with the following groups to plan, conduct and evaluate the 4-H Health Jam.
- Bellarmine University School of Allied Health: conducted an experiential health and career fair during which students explored allied health careers through activities related to body systems. Students rotated through six stations where they used model clay to form healthy and unhealthy cells, created a model of the respiratory system, learned how muscles and bones work together to create movement, saw the microscopic effects of smoking on the lungs and cells, and completed other hands-on activities. The university also provided lunch for the students and staff. After the health and career fair, students toured campus, observed daily campus activities, and experienced university classroom settings and student life.
- University of Louisville School of Medicine: second-year medical student volunteers and a professor conducted Moc Doc, a simulation exercise that allowed students to role play doctor, nurse, and patient while wearing

appropriate medical attire. Students diagnosed common injuries, learned how to take vital signs (pulse, respirations), locate major organs in the body, listened to the heart and lungs using a stethoscope, observed the inner ear using an otoscope, and learned about the academic preparation and requirements for medical school.

- Louisville Metro Health Department: provided staff to facilitate learning stations on the effects of diabetes on the body and how to prevent diabetes.
- Louisville Area Health Education Center: served as the Health Jam Committee liaison to recruit personnel and resources from the medical community, contacted local universities to host components of Health Jam, assisted in the development of a pre/post test, provided financial support for program activities, attended the Health Jam and assisted with the facilitation of the total Health Jam program.
- Baptist East/Milestone Wellness Center: provided instructors for physical education sessions.
- Gutermuth Elementary Family Resource Center: recruited and screened participants for the Health Jam; secured completed permission forms; served as liaison between parents, students and Health Jam Committee; administered SHEE tests and Health Jam pre/posts tests; attended Health Jam and assisted in supervising students and facilitating Health Jam activities.
- Okolona Elementary Family Resource Center: same as above
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program: served on the Health Jam Committee and conducted "Fat Bucks" sessions, planned menus focusing on healthy meal and snack choices, attended Health Jam and assisted with facilitation of total Health Jam program.

14. Program Evaluation

a. Methods
For this section, please include an overall description of how the evaluation was conducted (e.g., what was the evaluation's design, what kinds of data were collected, from whom, by what methods, etc.). It is also helpful for this section to indicate the extent to which your program's goals and objectives (described in Question 8) were met. Consider including logic models, tables, charts and/or graphics when appropriate. These can go in the Appendices.

Sample Methods Section from a Program of Distinction Manuscript

Evaluation of the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program includes the following:

(1) An assessment of the overall impact of the conference on the student's likelihood to attend college and becoming involved in leadership roles

(2) An assessment of the leadership experiences of the Youth Leadership Board

(3) Review of program content, workshops, schedule, and appeal to youth

An additional component of the program evaluation is a learning assessment survey that utilizes a retrospective pre-test methodology.

b. Process Evaluation

Please describe any process evaluation of the program that has been conducted and results from this evaluation that support that program activities were implemented as planned. A process evaluation assesses the extent to which a program is operating as intended and identifies opportunities for improving implementation. It does not tell you whether the program itself was effective. A process evaluation might, "examine how consistent the services are actually delivered within the goals of the program, whether services are delivered to appropriate recipients, how well service delivery is organized, the effectiveness of program management, the use of program resources, and other such matters."[2]

This could include, for example, a description of any available participation data (number of participants, intensity of participation, duration of participation, etc.), focus group results in which participants were asked for feedback about the program, etc.

Sample Process Evaluation Section from a Program of Distinction

The 4-H Health Jam set a participation goal of 40 students, 20 students from each participating elementary school. Thirty-eight students were able to attend the Health Jam overnight camp which kicked-off the nine week program (Two students moved to other schools during the nine week program and reduced total enrollment to 36 students). The eight week follow-up was held for the students who attended the two-day camp. At the schools' request, follow-up sessions were conducted during the final hour of the school day once a week as opposed to after school to limit the influence of transportation needs. Since most Louisville students are bused to non-community schools, transportation becomes a major expense for after school programs.

Sample Process Evaluation Section from a Program of Distinction

In 2004, YFP hired a research firm to conduct an external process evaluation of sites in three of Utah's most urban counties (Bach Harrison, 2005). It was found that in many cases mentor and mentee participation was higher than expected; however, in several cases it was lower. There was inconsistency in FNO and 4-H participation. Results from the process evaluation have been used to refine program implementations and standards. Modifications have included increased mentor training and site coordinator accountability, with greater emphasis on 4-H and FNO involvement.

For the annual internal process evaluation, site coordinators submit individualized mentee reports that document time spent in mentoring, 4-H, and FNO activities each month. Additional process data collected include: time between enrollment and "match" to mentor, parental involvement, and number of activities (4-H and FNO) offered. This information is reviewed to determine if mentors and sites are meeting program standards. The process data is also incorporated into the larger outcome evaluations to account for differential effects of the YFP participation.

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[2] Ross, P., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pg. 57.

c. Outcome Evaluation

Please describe any outcome evaluation of the program that has been conducted, and results from this evaluation that indicate there were real, measurable short-term, mid-term, and/or long-term changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, practices, or conditions. Consider presenting your data in a tabular or graphic format to enhance the readability of your manuscript.

Sample Outcomes and Impacts Response from a Program of Distinction Manuscript

The Life Skills assessment is the primary tool used to gather information on the impact of the LIFE Program. A summary of the maximum possible score for the life skills assessment is 140 points, since each of the 28 questions can receive between one and five points. The scores in the first round of the assessment (conducted in 2002) provided a baseline picture of how the participants rated themselves in key life skills areas. The results were telling: the average total score for the sample was only 67 percent (94 out of a possible 140 points). This indicates that, on average, respondents did not rate themselves highly in a number of skills areas. The average score in January 2003 increased to 75 percent (105 out of a possible 140 points). This indicates that there have been some improvements in life skills among the children and youth participating in the LIFE Program. While there were improvements in every category, the greatest improvements came in social competencies (up 23 percent), communication (up 18 percent), and decision making (up 12 percent).

Average Scores by Category, July 2002 and January 2003 (percent)

Life Skills Category	Round 1: July 2002 (n=7)	Round 2: January 2003 (n=9)	Percent change in average scores
Academics/learning	70	74	+6
Goal setting/achievement	62	67	+8
Decision making	69	77	+12
Problem solving	70	76	+9
Communication	60	71	+18
Social competencies	66	81	+23
Self esteem	75	80	+7
Total Score	**67**	**75**	**+12**

d. Communication to stakeholders

How has evidence of the effectiveness and/or impact of this program been communicated to key stakeholders, such as program participants, staff, family members, community members, funders, etc.? For example, did you write reports? Post your program and evaluation results of the Internet? Develop a brochure? Please be specific and provide more detail than saying, "we communicated results."

Sample Communication to Stakeholders Section from a Program of Distinction

Program evaluation results are shared in an annual publication with school administrators, advisory board members, conference instructors, parents, county

directors, local press and donors. Oral and poster sessions have been conducted at local, state and national events for community members and youth educators. Local press is invited to the event and allowed to interview student leadership. The conference has been publicized in area newspapers and regional television coverage. Each year, city and county political leaders are invited to the event to discuss the importance of leadership and community involvement by all citizens.

15. Evidence of Sustainability

Please describe how this program is being sustained over time, or plans that have been developed to sustain this program over time.

Sample Program Sustainability Section from a Program of Distinction
      The Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program has been successfully conducted for 16 years with continued support from Hispanic families, area schools and businesses within the two counties. Many of the youth participate in the program for a minimum of three years and 80% of the workshop instructors and exhibitors have volunteered at least nine years for the program. Program participants have organized and implemented community fundraisers to defray the cost of the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference. Corporate sponsorships and grants defray the cost of the Convention Center rental, keynote speaker fees, and workshop material. County 4-H staff implemented the program through their base programming efforts.

16. Replicability

How has this program been replicated in other settings? If it has not been replicated, please describe possibilities for replication in other settings. Include any components that are needed for successful replication, regardless of whether the program has actually been replicated.

Sample Replication Section from a Program of Distinction
      This program has been replicated in Jefferson County and five of the seven surrounding suburban and rural counties. It has also been replicated in several other counties throughout the state of Kentucky. The major factor that contributed to the success and impact of the program was the collaboration with other community agencies, local government, universities and elementary schools that are working to overcome the serious health risks to the youth of our state. Each of these partners brings a unique perspective and an additional network of resources to the issue of children's health. Through the collaboration, we were able to merge the knowledge and the resources of the community and work toward our common goal of improving the health of the youth in our community. It is only by working together in a coordinated community effort that we are going to be able to overcome the cultural norms and lifestyle habits that underlie many of the unhealthy behaviors.
      The Cooperative Extension Service contributed expertise in planning, conducting, and evaluating an overnight camping program and on-going special interest groups in the public schools. Other partners contributed the knowledge and expertise in the areas of personal health and nutrition, body systems, physical fitness, and health careers.
      The 4-H Health Jam uses traditional camping and club program delivery modes to address growing concerns with children's health. Because the Health Jam uses these familiar delivery modes, it is easy for youth educators to adapt these traditional

programs to an overnight camp with a health and fitness theme combined with in-school or after school special interest groups. The support and camaraderie of peers and caring adults encourages youth to continue participation in the follow-up program and helps ensure the successful development of healthy lifestyle choices and habits.

17. Rationale and Importance of Program

Please describe how this program represents something that 4-H educators, Cooperative Extension administrators and faculty, colleagues, parents, youth, funders, and other youth development professionals should know about.

Sample Rationale and Importance of Program Section from a Program of Distinction

The Family School Bridge project provides a link between families and their children's school and teachers. Research has shown that children who find success at school are less likely to become involved in violence and substance abuse as they mature, and that children who are raised by competent parents are likely to be successful in school. The DTBY Bridges project helps build self-efficacy in parents, and through positive interaction with school personnel, increases the belief that they should be involved in their child's school and their learning process. Children learn social skills and acceptance and their perceptions of school become more positive, thereby increasing the protective factors in a child's life. Teachers learn to better collaborate with parents, emphasize family strengths and have greater self-efficacy. Teachers, families, and children who have participated in the program all say that it has made an enormous difference in their relationships with each other and in many ways that can only positively affect the outcomes on the children.